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Marcel Ray Duriez 2 min read · Jun 17, 2026

If you're looking for an recovery group topic called "The Defenders and the Advocates," it can be a powerful discussion about the different roles people take in recovery.

The Defenders and the Advocates In recovery

So-o, we often meet two versions of ourselves. The Defender is the part that protects our addiction, our pride, our excuses, and our old ways of thinking.
The Defender says:
"It wasn't that bad."
"I can handle it myself."
"Nobody understands me."
"They are the problem, not me."
The Defender's job is to protect the ego, even when the ego is hurting us.
Many of us spent years defending behaviors that were destroying our lives.
The Advocate, on the other hand, fights for recovery. The Advocate says:
"I need help."
"I made mistakes."
"What can I do differently?"

"I am responsible for my actions."

The Advocate speaks for our future rather than our past.

Step One requires us to stop being defenders of our addiction and become advocates for our recovery. We stop arguing for the disease and start arguing for the person we want to become.

Discussion Questions

When have I defended unhealthy behavior?

What excuses did I use while active in addiction?

How does pride interfere with my recovery?

What does being an advocate for myself look like today?

Who advocated for me when I couldn't advocate for myself?

What is the difference between making an excuse and making an amends?

When do I become defensive in meetings?

How can honesty strengthen my recovery?

What does accountability mean to me?

Am I defending my past or building my future?

Closing Thought

Recovery begins when we stop defending the things that are hurting us and start advocating for the life we deserve. Every day we have a choice: to be a defender of our addiction or an advocate for our recovery.

"The disease wants a defense attorney. Recovery wants an advocate."

Marcel Ray Duriez

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